

MEMORANDUM

To: Potential Developers and Interested Citizens
From: Planning Director
Date: August 15, 2002
Subject: Potential for Office Service (OS) Rezoning

The Office Service (OS) zoning district (formerly RS) was developed in 1974 in part to allow the conversion of single-family homes along arterial streets to office uses. Mesa has many single family homes which were developed with frontage on arterial streets. Often these homes were developed before these streets carried significant volumes of traffic. As the traffic volume has increased, so has the noise, congestion, general inconvenience and risk of living adjacent to a heavily traveled street.

As a result, at some point, an alternative use for these homes is often sought. This is particularly true of larger homes on larger lots which generally have the greatest number of potential reuse options.

Of the reuse options that are available, office uses are generally the most appropriate in that they are quiet, clean, well maintained, do not generate appreciable evening or weekend activity, and generate relatively little traffic. As a result, small offices usually maintain a “residential character” that is compatible with their adjacent residential neighbors.

In evaluating whether a proposed rezoning request appears to be a good candidate for OS zoning the staff considers the following factors:

- Does the property have frontage on an arterial street?
- Is the site large enough to provide space for the parking, landscaping, drainage, and remodeling, etc. that would be required to convert the existing home/property into an office use?
- What is the proposed use for the property? How much remodeling is needed? How much parking will be provided, and how will it be placed on the site?
- What will the property look like after the conversion? Will it still have a residential scale and character? How much improvement is planned to the appearance of the home? Will it meet the Design Guidelines?
- What impact will the project have on the surrounding neighborhood? Will the project be single or two stories in height? Are additional setbacks, screening, or landscaping needed? Where is the new driveway? Can traffic on local streets be minimized?
- Does the property have deed restrictions that will need to be modified to permit conversion of the home into another use?
- Is the property on a corner, or in the center of a block?
- What are the surrounding properties like? Will the request, if approved, spur other similar requests in the area? Do we want to encourage additional rezoning in this area? Have other properties already been rezoned?

Given the great variety in the size and location of homes with frontage on arterial streets, plus the great variety in the size and nature of potential reuse requests, it is difficult to develop a list of criteria or conditions which will “guarantee” the successful rezoning of any property.

In general, however, the Planning Division Staff, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the City Council (who makes the final decision), have established the following “tests” which need to be met for an Office Service rezoning request to be favorably considered:

1. The property should be in an area where OS zoning has been granted in the past and/or the City policy is to consider such requests.
2. The property can no longer be reasonably used for residential purposes due to changes that have taken place in the character of the area, and that there is no viable use for the property without rezoning.
3. The property must have primary access from an arterial street, to minimize traffic impact on local streets.
4. The property should preferably be located on a corner. Mid-block rezoning requests will typically be considered only if the property is adjacent to another parcel which has office zoning, or if it is large enough to provide adequate screening and separation for the neighbors.
5. The proposed use must “fit” on the site. The project must meet all the City’s development requirements for parking, landscaping, setbacks, screening design, storm water retention, etc., without overcrowding the site or the need for variances.
6. The proposed use should be compatible with the surrounding area in terms of traffic, lighting, hours of operation, noise, etc.
7. The property shall be free of (or have modified) any private deed restrictions which would limit, or prohibit, the use of the property for an office use.
8. Mesa’s Citizen Participation Guidelines will require that the applicant meet with the surrounding residents, property owners, registered neighborhoods and interested parties to review the proposed rezoning request and development plans with them and discuss any concerns they may have about the project. If the project can be modified to help resolve specific neighborhood concerns, the applicant is encouraged to do so prior to presentation of the request to the Planning and Zoning Board and City Council. Neighborhood and staff support for any project are both desirable, and the applicant should work with both groups to improve the project where possible.